

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMCONSUL BUKAVU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 432

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUKAVU 58

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (FM LINE BUKAVU VICE KINSHASA)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CG

SUBJECT: THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN KIVU

1. AS THE OFFICIAL CAMPAIGN MONTH DRAWS TO A CLOSE THE KIVU ELECTORATE HAS SEEN A FAIRLY ACTIVE CAMPAIGN CONSIDERING THE OBSTACLES THAT FACE THE CANDIDATES--KIVU'S POOR TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES, LIMITED MASS MEDIA, AND THE CANDIDATES' OWN FINANCIAL LIMITATIONS. SINCE EACH CANDIDATE'S PLATFORM IS BY LAW RESTRICTED TO THE CATECHISM OF THE MPR THERE ARE NO ISSUES FACING THE VOTERS. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE ELECTIONS WILL BE WON BY THOSE BEST KNOWN, BEST FINANCED, OR WITH THE BEST TRIBAL CONNECTIONS, WITH LITTLE REGARD FOR THEIR INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMS. DESPITE THE GOVERNMENTS'S STRESS ON THE NATIONAL UNITY OF THE MPR, TRIBALISM WILL PLAY A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE IN ALL THE ELECTIONS.

2. ONE SEES POSTERS AND HANDBILLS SCATTERED AROUND ALL THROUGH THE REGION, IN OFFICES, ON AUTOMOBILES, AND IN STORES. A PRINTING SHOP RUN BY AMERICAN MISSIONARIES HAS BEEN SWAMPED
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WITH ORDERS. THERE HAVE BEEN SAVE POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE WEEKLY REGIONAL NEWSPAPER "JUA" BUT ITS CIRCULATION IS LIMITED AND IT IS PLAGUED BY CONSTANT SHORTAGES OF NEWSPRINT. BUKAVU'S POWERFUL RADIO STATION--WHEN NOT OUT OF ORDER DUE TO TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES--HAS HAD INTERVIEWS WITH SEVERAL CANDIDATES BUT HAS HAD NO PAID POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENTS ON BEHALF OF ANY CANDIDATE. IN BUKAVU CANDIDATES HAVE BEEN CAMPAIGNING IN THE

MARKETS AND OTHER GATHERING PLACES, IN SOME CASES WITH RALLIES OR PRE-ARRANGED SPEECHES. A FEW BETTER FINANCED CANDIDATES HAVE SOUND TRUCKS CRUISING BUKAVU AND SOME HAVE PASSED OUT FREE FIREWOOD, CLOTHING, AND BEER. AT THE SAME TIME OTHER CANDIDATES HAVE SCARCELY CAMPAIGNED AT ALL, EITHER BECAUSE OF FINANCIAL RESTRAINTS OR BECAUSE THEIR POLITICAL BACKGROUNDS MAKE THEM FEEL IT WISE TO ASSUME A LOW PROFILE.

3. THERE ARE NINETEEN CANDIDATES FOR THE TWO POLITICAL BUREAU SEATS FROM KIVU. THOSE MOST OFTEN CITED AS POSSIBLE WINNERS ARE:

- (A) MIRUHO BAHYA, FIRST GOVERNOR OF KIVU AFTER INDEPENDENCE AND A WELL RESPECTED AND HONEST ELDER STATESMAN. HOWEVER HE HAS LIVED IN KINSHASA IN RECENT YEARS DUE TO POOR HEALTH.
- B) KWAKABUBA SHINGA, OF RWANDA TUTSI ORIGIN, SAID TO BE "BISENGIMANA'S CANDIDATE". A PROMINENT BUSINESSMAN AND CAMMISSAIRE DU PEUPLE, HE IS APPARENTLY THE BEST FINANCED CANDIDATE.
- C) TSHOMBA FARIALA, LONG-TIME POLITICIAN AND BUSINESSMAN FROM MANIEMA (WESTERN KIVU).
- D) MWEZE CHIMUSA, A NEWCOMER TO POLITICS, THE DIRECTOR OF ANEZA (NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ENTERPRISES) IN BUKAVU.

4. OTHER CANDIDATES FOR POLITICAL BUREAU INCLUDE SEVERAL INCUMBENT COMMISSAIRES DU PEUPLE, ANOTHER EX-GOVERNOR OF KIVU, ONE FORMER MINISTER, THE REGIONAL HEAD OF THE ECZ (UMBRELLA CONFIDENTIAL

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ORGANIZATION FOR PROTESTANT CHURCHES), ONE PROMINENT SMUGGLER, AND A FEW NEW FACES.

5. THERE ARE 320 CANDIDATES FOR THE 42 LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SEATS FROM KIVU AND 151 CANDIDATES FOR THE THREE BUKAVU ZONE COUNCILS.

6. THE ELECTIONS HAVE GENERATED GREAT INTEREST ON THE PART OF THE CANDIDATES AND THEIR CLOSE ASSOCIATES, BUT ONLY MILD INTEREST AMONG THE REST OF THE POPULATION. THE PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY IN THE RURAL AREAS, EXPECT THEIR LIVES TO BE AFFECTED BY THIS OSTENSIBLE RETURN TO DEMOCRACY. IT IS FREQUENTLY SAID THAT THE VICTORIOUS CANDIDATES WILL GO TO KINSHASA, GET RICH, AND DO LITTLE FOR KIVU.

7. THE ELECTIONS HAVE PUT A TREMENDOUS ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN ON THE REGIONAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES. THE COMMISSAIRE DE REGION HAS BEEN CONTINUALLY ON THE ROAD CHECKING PREPARATIONS. EVEN IN THE BUSH ALL LOW-PRIORITY MATTERS ARE BEING DEFERRED UNTIL LATER IN THE YEAR. BUT THE PRIVATE CONSENSUS AMONG THE COMMISSAIRE DE REGION'S ASSISTANTS IS THAT THEY WILL MANAGE SOMEHOW.

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